

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 L-03 ACDA-07 AID-05 IGA-02 OMB-01
TRSE-00 DHA-02 MC-02 EB-08 H-01 /080 W
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P R 281549Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2850
INFO SECDEF PRIORITY
CINCSOUTH QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BOGOTA 6943

SECDEF FOR JCS/DSAA

CINCSOUTH FOR SCSA

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS CO
SUBJ: FY 79 SECURITY ASSISTANCE

REF: STATE 171096

1. UTILIZATION OF FMS CREDITS BY COLOMBIA SUPPORTS
A LONG RANGE PLAN TO ACHIEVE A MODEST DEGREE OF MODERNIZATION,
MINIMALLY ADEQUATE TO PERMIT THE COLOMBIAN MILITARY TO
PERFORM ITS MISSION. THE CURRENT PROJECTED LEVELS OF CREDIT FOR
FY 79 THRU 83 WERE DEVELOPED AS A COMPROMISE BETWEEN WHAT
IS ACTUALLY NEEDED AND THE REALITIES OF FISCAL AUSTERITY
AND WERE BASED ON COST ESTIMATES WHICH DID NOT FULLY
CONSIDER THE HIGH INFLATIONARY TREND IN MILITARY MATERIEL
AND SERVICES. COLOMBIA'S PLANS ARE INDEED MODEST, EVEN IN
TERMS OF LATIN AMERICAN ARMED FORCES. THEY DO NOT PROVIDE
FOR ADEQUATE LEVELS OF COMMUNICATIONS; FOR THE SIGNIFICANT
INCREASES IN MOBILITY WHICH SHOULD BE ACQUIRED; FOR THE MUCH
WIDER RANGE OF COASTAL SURVEILLANCE AND SECURITY REQUIRED; OR
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FOR THE NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS IN COMMAND AND CONTROL. NEITHER DO
THEY CALL FOR SOPHISTICATED WEAPONRY OR FOR THE ACQUISITION
OF AN ARMOR OR ANTI-AIR CAPABILITY. IN BRIEF THEY ARE
CONSERVATIVE PLANS WHICH HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED UNDER THE FIRM
CONTROL OF A DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT
WHICH PLACES MAXIMUM EMPHASIS ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC
IMPROVEMENTS, VIEWS ITS ARMED

FORCES AS A MEANS OF PRESERVING NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY AND WHICH WILL NOT PERMIT THE MILITARY ROLE TO EXPAND BEYOND THE MINIMUM REQUIRED FOR NATIONAL DEFENSE. FURTHER, WHILE THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT HAS LOOKED TO THE US TO PROVIDE CREDITS TO INITIATE THIS LONG-RANGE PROGRAM, IT HAS ALSO BEEN FORTHCOMING IN ASSUMING AN EVEN INCREASING SHARE OF THE FINANCIAL BURDEN.

2. AS A CONSEQUENCE OF ADOPTING A POLICY OF GRADUAL MODERNIZATION OVER AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME AND AT A MODERATE LEVEL, COLOMBIA HAS ALREADY ACHIEVED A MINIMUM LEVEL OF FMS EXPENDITURES -- IN FACT, IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT THE PLAN IS NOT SUUFICIENT TO PROVIDE DESIRED MINIMUM LEVELS OF SECURITY. IN ANY EVENT, THE FIXED PROJECTIONS FOR EXPENDITURES COUPLED WITH THE INFLATIONARY THRUST OF MATERIEL COSTS MAKE COLOMBIA'S PLANS marginally ADEQUATE AT BEST.

3. IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT THE COLOMBIAN ARMED FORCES LONG DEFERRED MODERNIZATION PLANS PLACE PRIMARY RELIANCE UPON THE US FOR MAJOR EQUIPMENT ITEMS, SPARE PARTS, AND TRAINING. THIS DESPITE THE FACT THAT MORE ATTRACTIVE OFFERS HAVE BEEN MADE BY THIRD COUNTRIES - - TO INCLUDE THE SOVIET UNION. AS A CONSEQUENCE THE COLOMBIAN ARMED FORCES ARE CLOSELY ALLIED TO THE US AND LOOK TO US FOR LEADERSHIP. BY CONTINUING THE FMS BACKED MODERNIZATION PLAN
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WHICH GOT OFF TO A LATE START IN FY 76, AND WHICH CONTEMPLATES A PREPONDERANCE OF US EQUIPMENT, WE ARE SURELY POSTPONING FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS BEYOND THE POSSIBLE END OF FMS CREDIT AND IMET GRANT AID AVAILABILITY, AN INFLUX OF THIRD COUNTRY MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND INFLUENCE TO FILL THE VOID WE WOULD LEAVE BEHIND.

4. MINIMUM LEVEL OF FY 79 FMS CREDITS FOR COLOMBIA IS 21.5 MILLION. THIS ALSO REPRESENTS THE CURRENT LEVEL OF ANTICIPATED CREDITS. ANY REDUCTION BELOW THIS AMOUNT WILL IMPACT SEVERELY ON A DEFENSE BUDGET WHICH AT BEST CAN BE CONSIDERED marginally ADEQUATE. HAVING ALREADY BEEN STRETCHED OVER AN INORDINATELY LONG PERIOD OF TIME, THE MODERNIZATION PLAN WILL NOT ACCOMODATE FURTHER EXTENSION. AT THIS LEVEL OF FINANCING, PLANS CALL FOR THE ACQUISITION OF A C-130 AIRCRAFT AND ASSOCIATED AIRCRAFT SUPPORT EQUIPMENT; FOUR SMALL NAVAL CRAFT TO INCLUDE A HARBOR TUG, A HARBOR UTILITY CRAFT, A FAST PATROL BOAT AND A HYDROFOIL GUN BOAT; 175 CARGO TRUCKS FOR INCREASED GROUND MOBILITY; SMALL ARMS WEAPONS; 20 BADLY NEEDED ARTILLERY PIECES; AND GROUND COMMUNICATIONS GEAR.

5. A MORE REALISTIC LEVEL OF FMS CREDITS SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED AT 32 MILLION DOLLARS. THIS INTERMEDIATE LEVEL WOULD PROVIDE FOR COMMENCEMENT OF REPLACEMENT EFFORTS FOR MIRAGE JETS WHICH WILL BE REACHING AN AGE OF UNECONOMIC REPAIRABILITY; THE ADDITIONAL PROCUREMENT OF AT LEAST ONE MORE C-130 AIRCRAFT; INCREASED PROCUREMENT OF COASTAL SURVEILLANCE CRAFT AND COMMUNICATIONS; MODERNIZATION OF GROUND COMMUNICATIONS GEAR; SMALL ARMS PROCUREMENT; AND GROUND MOBILITY EQUIPMENT.

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6. REDUCTION BELOW THE MINIMUM LEVEL OF FMS CREDITS WOULD, AS PREVIOUSLY STATED, ADVERSELY AFFECT THE COLOMBIAN ARMED FORCES MODERNIZATION PLANS. IT IS DOUBTFUL IF THE COLOMBIANS WOULD ACCEPT SUCH A REDUCTION WITHOUT EFFORTS TO ACQUIRE FUNDS FROM OTHER SOURCES, EITHER THROUGH INCREASED COLOMBIAN SPENDING FOR NATIONAL DEFENSE OR FROM THIRD COUNTRY SOURCES. GIVEN THE CURRENT SITUATION OF MAXIMUM EMPHASIS ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS, A THIRD COUNTRY APPROACH WOULD SEEM LIKELY. WHAT IS DIFFICULT TO PROPHECY IS THE POLITICAL REACTION BY COLOMBIA TO ANY FURTHER INDICATION OF DECREASED INTEREST AND SUPPORT BY THE US. COLOMBIA HAS ACCEPTED A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US BASED ON SHARED INTERESTS AND MUTUAL APPRECIATION OF DEMOCRATIC VALUES. IT LOOKS TO THE US AS A PARTNER IN DEFENSE EFFORTS AND ENJOYS A LONG AND FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. WHILE IT ACCEPTS THE NEED FOR ASSUMP-

TION OF AN INCREASED SHARE OF DEFENSE COSTS, IT WOULD BE
INADVISABLE TO ACCELERATE THIS TREND BEYOND A POINT WHICH
COULD BE ACCEPTED OR ACCOMPLISHED BY THE COLOMBIANS. IF WE DO
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THIS, WE WILL UNQUESTIONABLY ENCOURAGE A MOVE TOWARDS DEPENDENCE
ON OTHER NATIONS FOR DEFENSE NEEDS. THE EXTENT OF SUCH
DEPENDENCE AND THE SPEED WITH WHICH IT IS ACCOMPLISHED
MAY BE IN QUESTION, BUT THE MOVEMENT IS NOT.

7. THE LEVEL OF IMET FUNDING IS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE
IN VIEW OF THE VALUE OF US INFLUENCE WHICH IS GRAINED THROUGH
THIS PROGRAM. THE COLOMBIAN ARMED FORCES ARE PATTERNED AFTER
THEIR US COUNTERPARTS AND LARGELY SUBSCRIBE TO THE VALUES AND
GOALS WHICH WE OURSELVES ESPOUSE. MUCH OF THIS CAN BE DIRECTLY
ATTRIBUTED TO THE ASSOCIATION WHICH INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS HAVE HAD
WITH THEIR US COUNTERPARTS. WE SHOULD MAINTAIN THIS INFLUENCE.
IN TERMS OF ACTUAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS, IMET MEETS NEEDS WHICH
CANNOT BE FILLED WITH EXISTING COLOMBIAN RESOURCES. THE REQUIRE-
MENTS FOR SPECIALIZED TRAINING WOULD OTHERWISE BE FILLED FROM
WITHOUT THE COUNTRY BY OTHER LATIN AMERICAN OR EUROPEAN
NATIONS. IN MANY CASES, TECHNICAL TRAINING IS, OF NECESSITY,
ORIENTED TOWARDS THE PREDOMINANT US EQUIPMENT INVENTORY WHICH
COLOMBIA POSSESSES. COLOMBIA HAS MADE A MAJOR EFFORT TO
SHARE IN THE COST OF SUCH TRAINING AND FUNDS FOR THIS EFFORT
HAVE BEEN DIVERTED FROM OTHER DEMANDING DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS.
A CONCERTED DRIVE IS UNDERWAY TO IMPROVE AND INCREASE
COLOMBIAN TRAINING CAPABILITIES, BUT THIS TOO REQUIRES THE
DIVERSION OF SCARCE FISCAL RESOURCES. IN THE SHORT TERM THERE
IS A REQUIREMENT TO INCREASE IMET FUNDING TO PERMIT
COLOMBIA TO MAKE VERY SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENTS TO ITS TRAINING
BASE WHILE CONTINUING THE CURRENT TRAINING EFFORTS. THIS
IN TURN WILL ALLOW FOR A LONGER RANGE REDUCTION IN THE
NEED FOR IMET SUPPORT. IN TERMS OF DOLLAR AMOUNTS REQUIRED
TO SUPPORT IMET IN COLOMBIA, THE FUTURE IS CLOUDED
BY THE IMPONDERABLES OF CONUS TRAINING COSTS, WHICH DEFY
ACCURATE FORECASTING, AND THE NECESSITY TO FUND CANAL ZONE
MILITARY SCHOOLS (CZMS) ON A FENCED-FUND BASIS. IN
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REGARDS TO THE LATTER, WE CAN ONLY FORECAST THAT COLOMBIA
WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT CZMS AS DICTATED BY FENCED - FUNDING
DEMANDS. WHATEVER THIS AMOUNT MAY BE INSOFAR AS COLOMBIA'S
IMET PROGRAM IS CONCERNED, IT SHOULD BE FURTHER
INCREASED BY THE SUM OF \$250,000 TO MEET THOSE
TRAINING REQUIREMENTS WHICH CANNOT BE SATISFIED BY CZMS.

THIS TOTAL FIGURE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED THE MINIMAL LEVEL. THIS FIGURE IN TURN SHOULD BE INCREASED BY THE SUM OF APPROXIMATELY \$90,000 TO \$135,000 TO PROVIDE FOR BASIC IMPROVEMENTS IN COLOMBIA'S MILITARY TRAINING BASE. THIS INCLUDES THE ACQUISITION OF A MEANINGFUL TRAINING LITERATURE CAPABILITY BASED ON US MILITARY TRAINING MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS AND FOR THE INITIATION OF A CENTRALLY CONTROLLED SYSTEM OF TRAINING AIDS PROCUREMENT AND DISTRIBUTION -- AGAIN BASED ON US MILITARY PROCEDURES AND EQUIPMENT. IF WE CANNOT MEET THESE MINIMAL LEVELS OF SUPPORT, WE LEAVE COLOMBIA NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO LOOK ELSEWHERE FOR SUCH AID; THEY HAVE ALREADY BEEN OFFERED SUCH ASSISTANCE FROM ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL ON A NO-COST BASIS. IN SUMMARY, IMET LEVELS FOR FY-79 SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED AT A MINIMAL LEVEL OF \$250,000; AN INTERMEDIATE LEVEL OF \$340,000; AND A DESIRED LEVEL OF \$385,000. ALL FIGURES ARE OVER AND ABOVE THAT WHICH WILL BE REQUIRED TO SUPPORT THE CZMS.

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